



California Foothills Legacy Area

Planning Update #3 – July 2013

Draft Environmental Assessment Available for Review

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is pleased to announce the availability of the Draft Environmental Assessment on the proposal to launch a new conservation easement program called the California Foothills Legacy Area (CFLA). This Planning Update: summarizes what we are proposing; describes where to get a copy of the plan and how to submit comments; and announces opportunities to attend seven open houses.

A New Tool for Ranchers

In an effort to conserve working rangelands and the wildlife they support, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service proposes to launch a new conservation easement program called the California Foothills Legacy Area (CFLA). This easement program would provide a new tool to help ranching families stay on their land while permanently protecting a portion of this important resource for wildlife. The proposed program would be completely voluntary. No new regulatory requirements would be placed on lands within or outside the program area. Ranches within three foothill areas of six counties bordering the San Joaquin Valley could be eligible for the program, depending on which alternative is selected (see page 2).



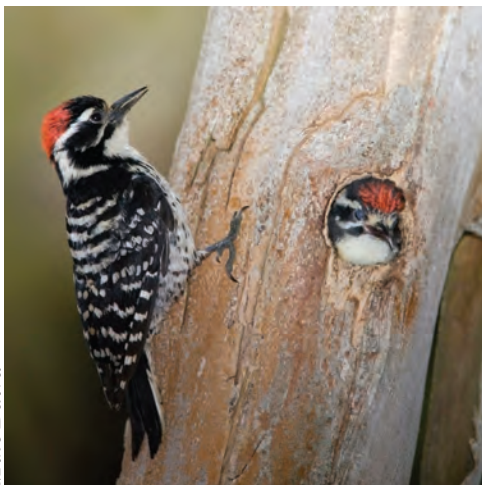
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Where to Find Information

View the Draft Environmental Assessment online at:

<http://go.usa.gov/YMWQ>

Other documents available online include a draft Easement Template and Easement Q & A.

There are a limited number of paper and CD copies of the documents available. To request a copy please:

Email:
FW8plancomments@fws.gov, or

Call:
916/414-6500

Submitting Comments

Comments may be submitted at the open houses, or through the following:

Email:
FW8plancomments@fws.gov

Fax:
916/414-6497

Mail:
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Pacific Southwest Region,
Refuge Planning
2800 Cottage Way, W-1832
Sacramento, CA 95825

Deadline for Comments

Comments must be received by September 15, 2013 to be considered for development of the final proposal.

Program Alternatives

The draft Environmental Assessment evaluates three alternatives for the proposed California Foothills Legacy Area. Under Alternative A, we would not launch the easement program. Under the Preferred Alternative (Alternative B), privately-owned rangelands within four counties would be eligible for the program. Under Alternative C, privately-owned rangelands within portions of six counties would be eligible for the program. The table below specifies which areas would be eligible under each alternative.

Rangeland Areas	Eligible Counties		
	Alternative A (No Action)	Alternative B (Preferred)	Alternative C
Central Sierra Foothills (>200 ft. elev.)	n/a	Merced Mariposa Stanislaus	Merced Mariposa Stanislaus
Southern Sierra Foothills (>500 ft. elev.)	n/a	Tulare	Tulare Kern
Diablo Range (>200 ft. elev.)	n/a	Merced Stanislaus	Merced Stanislaus San Benito
Easement Acquisition Goal (acres)	n/a	200,000	325,000



Counties with Potential Program Areas



Join Us at An Open House

Your input is very important to us. We invite you to attend one of seven public open houses during early August. Fish and Wildlife Service staff will be available at several stations located in the meeting rooms to answer questions and gather your comments on the Draft EA for the proposed California Foothills Legacy Area.

Date/Time	Public Open House Locations
August 1 / 5-8 pm	Porterville - Holiday Inn Express Hotel & Suites, 840 S. Jaye St.
August 2 / 5-8 pm	Bakersfield - East Bakersfield Veterans Building, Rooms 1&2, 2101 Ridge Road
August 5 / 5-8 pm	Modesto - Modesto Centre Plaza, Pistash Room, 1000 L Street
August 6 / 5-8 pm	Merced - Merced County Farm Bureau, 646 South Highway 59
August 7 / 5-8 pm	Mariposa - Board of Supervisors Hearing Room, 5100 Bullion St.
August 8 / 5-8 pm	Los Banos - San Luis NWR Complex Visitor Center, 7376 S. Wolfsen Road
August 9 / 5-8 pm	Hollister - Hollister Community Center, 300 West St.

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